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WORDS, WORDS, WORDS!

THE following petition is said to have been offered by an eccentric clergyman in a neighboring village, at the opening of a town meeting, called to vote upon a proposed amendment to the constitution:

"We pray Thee, O Lord, that the people may not expla'n, and *expla'n* and EXPLA'N the constitution all away."

When we hear a teacher complicating the natural difficulties of the solution of an arithmetical or other problem by a multiplicity of words, or listen to the parrot-like repetition of the same by a pupil, the above quaint petition, comes forcibly to our mind, and we fear it would not be inappropriate for the ear of many a teacher.

Take the following example in illustration:

If $100 gain $6 in 12 months, what time would be required for $400 to gain $16?

Pupil's Solution. If it requires 12 months for $100 to gain a certain sum, it will require $\frac{1}{8}$ of 12 months for $800 to gain the same sum, etc.

Teacher's Solution. If it requires 12 months for $100 to gain

a sum, it will require 100 times 12 for $1 to gain it, and $\frac{1}{800}$ of 100 times 12 months for $800 to gain the same sum, etc.

Now the teacher may have particular reasons for enforcing his solution; it is certainly more general; but, considered simply as a solution for this particular example, it is not better than the pupil's; his should, under ordinary circumstances, at least, be commended and probably accepted.

A teacher once boasted, in our presence, that his pupils could retain in memory and solve any question in Article B, Section 7, Colburn's First Lessons. We were invited to select one; instead of complying we gave the following: $\frac{2}{3}$ of 6 is $\frac{4}{5}$ of how many thirds of 9; so far from solving this were the pupils, that no one could retain one half of the question in his mind, after it had been slowly repeated a second and a third time, and it was solved but indifferently when written upon the board. It was evident that the examples in the book had been repeated till their solution required scarcely a mental effort, for the question assigned was simpler in its terms than any of those in the book, and involved the same operations precisely.

Thus the prime object of *mental* arithmetic is often defeated. Certain forms of expression are sometimes desirable, and may profitably, perhaps, be repeated, even though they are not perfectly comprehended; but this, we think, but rarely and temporarily. All forms that are not helpful, are hurtful; they tend to obscure the ideas, if they do not actually become a substitute for ideas; they tend to stultify and not to instruct, and the naturally active mind of childhood becomes tame and inert in the place which is intended to stimulate and animate. Such is the tendency of the forms of grammatical analysis; for example, the pupil is required to analyze the following:

"We must not blame fortune for our own faults."

He proceeds thus: *we must not blame*, etc., is a sentence, because it makes complete sense; the teacher objects; the child substitutes, "because the words are so combined as to express an idea," and his definition is accepted for its conformity to the book, sadly at fault though it be. The analysis proceeds: *we* is the subject, *must blame* is the grammatical predicate; *must blame* is directly limited

by *not* and *fortune*, and *fortune* is indirectly limited by *faults* connected by *for*, etc. Thus he goes on, giving more heed to his "direct" and "indirect" limitations, than to the sense of the sentence, which latter we understand to be the chief end of analysis. Would not this end be attained and errors avoided, if, instead of the above, he were required to state simply what and *how* each word and phase limits, not "directly" or "indirectly," but simply, *must blame* is limited by *for our own faults*, — telling for what we must not blame fortune, etc.?

Arbitrary rules have the same tendency. The pupil is taught that *that* is a conjunction whenever it can be omitted without destroying the sense, and that it is a relative pronoun whenever *which* can be substituted for it. He must be sadly perplexed with such sentences as the following:

"Please return the knife *that* I lent you."

"Where is the book *that* you recommended?"

He is taught lists of prepositions, and nothing of their nature; he parses by the aid of his dictionary; he defines, too, by that, using it not as subordinate, but as a principal help. He commits long paragraphs of history or geography; he mumbles senselessly through pages of the reader. There is no study that, in the hands of the prosaic, unskilful teacher, will not degenerate into a like mass of meaningless words. Thus the curious mind is crammed with words — words without ideas; and we hear of the "mortified predicate," and listen to such rules as "adjectives directly limit nouns and *substitute* for nouns," till we cry out in pain and disgust,

"More matter, with less art!"

Whence arise these mumblings and meaningless utterances? Evidently from a want of contact of the mind with the ideas embodied in the words. Can this contact be induced? Certainly it can, if the subject is adapted to the age of the learner, and both are in the charge of a competent teacher. In much of the primary instruction, things should precede words, and when words cannot be illustrated by things, they should, at least, be interpreted and enforced by the living teacher. The imagination must be assisted to grasp the ideas.

Suppose a pupil is required to solve the following problem:

A fox is 96 rods before a greyhound and running at the rate of 15 rods, whilst the dog pursues at the rate of 21 rods in the same period of time; how far must the dog run to overtake the fox?

He may be taught to say, "If the hound gains 6 rods upon the fox in running 21 rods, to gain 1 rod he must run $\frac{1}{6}$ of 21 rods, and to gain 96 rods he must run 96 times $\frac{1}{6}$ of 21 rods;" and yet, having never conceived of the figure or relations of the animals in the race, he will utterly fail in a subsequent review of the same problem. But assist him to image the scene in his mind; give the conditions of the problem a definite locality; let the distance, 96 rods, have a place; let the fox spring forward 15 rods in a half minute, and the dog bound after him 21 rods in the same period of time, it will become a problem with life, and its solution will be intelligible.

Time is more profitably spent in discussing the peculiarities of a few problems, than in solving many that have no peculiarities. Questions should be put in a variety of forms; for instance, let such questions as the following be substituted for the formal declension of the personal pronouns: What are the personal pronouns of the first person? of the second? of the third? What are of the nominative case? the possessive? etc.; instead of a formal conjugation, ask for the peculiarity of the verb in the third, singular, of the present tense, etc.

Children must be brought directly in contact with the mind of the teacher, that they may be moulded by him; too many fail here from a bad theory; they designedly keep themselves aloof; they are not like the Great Teacher; they repel where they should attract; they repel with their cold heart, with their grave looks and reserved mien, with their tones, with their words; they use too many or too few; they use them not wisely, perhaps harshly; they are soon either unheeded or received with contempt.

Any lack of a hearty interest in the pupil, will put distance between him and his teacher; a proud and haughty spirit will do this; absorption in other than school duties will at least beget estrangement; a selfish mind will receive, as it merits, no welcome to the heart of a child; and much less will a hypocritical or self-opinionated spirit. We have known one so self-controlled, so per-

fectly even in all his modes of discipline and instruction, and withal, so prescient to the faults of childhood, that his very perfectness repelled his charge; his children were always perfectly orderly, but, also, painfully passive; with such a teacher, the *whole* nature cannot be developed. Could his natural gifts have been combined with a buoyant spirit, an unconscious sympathy with the young; could he have entered familiarly into all their plans — checking their perversities, and encouraging all their feeble efforts — he would have been perfect as a teacher, so far as mortal can be.

Says the sacred proverb, —

"Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

So, in an emphatic sense, are acts fitly performed. There is often more force in the spirit in which a deed is done, than in the deed itself; it is so with punishment, whether corporal or other. There are, we know, those who can discipline thoroughly without an appeal to the lower motives; there are others with no lack of the right spirit, that cannot do without such an appeal; but many, it is to be feared, who resort to the grosser forms of punishment, do it in so bad a spirit as to do more harm than good; they come in contact with the mind of the child they would correct, but in such a spirit that they stir up anger and hate.

The child's life is a life of realities; he loves to see, to taste, to handle; his great natural source of knowledge is things; he is, moreover, interested in incidents, in narrations; and when he has learned to read, he will delight in reading words that convey ideas about things in which he is interested. If the words he reads describe things in which he feels little or no interest, they will not inform his mind to any great extent, and it is just here that the person apt to teach comes happily to the pupil's aid.

The child yields ready obedience to those conditions upon which his happiness, as he sees it, depends. But when a task is irksome, it is necessary, sometimes, that authority should interpose to enforce obedience. To a just demand, the mind of a child often yields reluctant assent; and just here the right spirit in the teacher aids greatly in enforcing the obnoxious rule. Nothing is so effective in all that pertains to the teacher's art as immediate, personal contact, mind with mind, heart with heart.

"WHAT IS THE BEST METHOD OF TEACHING ENGLISH COMPOSITION."

A PRIZE ESSAY, BY E. N. L. READ BEFORE THE ESSEX COUNTY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, MARCH, 1863.

THIS world is one great school, and we are all its scholars. In this school are many departments; we are in the English; and a most remarkable feature of this institution is, that while all are scholars, all are equally teachers;—it is *one great monitorial school*. In this life-school, teachers do not sit on platforms and pupils in rows, but the teachings are imperceptible, and the recitations silent; we only know the lessons are learned by the effects they produce, which are often most wonderful and lasting. Few are aware how enduring the influence of one upon another is, even in the most trifling acts of life.

No one treads the green earth, but his very gait makes lookers-on more *manly, energetic men*, or more *downtreading, unambitious mortals,—noble, high-souled women*, or *inefficient do-nothings*. Perform any little graceful act, and it will be strange indeed, if your surroundings are not more refined for hours after,—do a really unselfish deed, however trivial, and the whole atmosphere about you becomes purer, while those who are permitted to breathe it, feel that they are nearer Heaven. Every manly or womanly deed makes the whole race more manly or womanly.

On the other hand, if you sink below the standard of excellence or good taste, you will surely drag others after you. Ah, in our lives, we are continually dropping stones upon the surface of custom, which, in their widening effects, ever go on,—and on,—and on,—we know not where.

This admitted, it follows, that as one great means of teaching children to put English together properly, the teacher must see to it, first of all, that his pupils hear from him nothing but what is chaste and even elegant in expression, and that they, themselves, be indulged in no language that does not come up to the teacher's standard of good English.

When a pupil asks a question, let him be taught to do it with no circumlocution, and with no awkward ellipses,—and when he makes a statement, let it not be put together loosely, even though

it may be fully understood. Let there be a beginning, a middle, and an end to it. Let it be expressed in plain English and to the point. I would enforce attention to these things as I think them all-important. Too many teachers are careless in this respect, and only when the grammar or rhetoric is open before them, think whether the child speaks properly or not. But if children were accustomed from their cradles, to hear only good language, there would be no need of grammars or rhetorics at all. These are only crutches or wooden legs to use in place of pliable bones and muscles. Very good articles to go with, I 'll allow, they are in their place, but he who depends upon them for progression, will find he halts terribly, in comparison with those who all their lives have used their own limbs.

A short time ago, I heard an eloquent speaker who had once been a slave and had grown up with a slave's low surroundings, address an audience upon the future of the freedman. Escaped from bondage, he had applied himself, with a will, to self culture, associated with refined whites on this and the other side of the Atlantic, and is now one of the most effective speakers in the cause of human liberty; — and yet he, in the earnestness of his lecture, in recounting an interview with a poor runaway slave in Canada, said, "I *teld* her." How deeply fixed are early habits and impressions! How important that awkward or coarse expressions be rooted out before the mind loses its pliability.

Let me repeat; — would you teach English properly, see to it, first of all, that you use your best influence in such a way that your pupils shall hear and use only correct, well-chosen language in their intercourse with you and with each other. Let the teacher attend to this particular, and he will find it comparatively easy to teach his pupils to write correctly, provided he does not give them a subject above their comprehension.

Children are naturally poetic. They have clearer visions of the true and beautiful about them, and, untrammelled by the prejudices and falsities of maturer life, see the relations of things in an original light, and express themselves often by most striking comparisons. Scarce one little child can be found, in whose soul, could we freely gaze, we should not find much to wonder at and admire. You and I, and all of us, have heard little child sayings which we

treasure up as precious jewels; instances to illustrate might be repeated indefinitely. Children should be encouraged to tell their thoughts freely. Not that they should be treated as little wonders either, better that their mines of thought should be all unseen but by God, than that they should become receptacles of vain glory.

A judicious teacher can draw out a child's mind without sacrificing his simplicity. A child should be as unconscious of his thought-treasures as the mountain streams of the sparkling metals they bear to the valleys below.

Oh how gently should these, our little charges, be led beside the still waters, how tenderly should their hearts be guarded, how delicately their minds be trained that that which "proceedeth out of their mouths" may purify and adorn their lives.

Children should be led to *talk* freely, even before they can print or write. Not in any set way, but when interested in their lessons, let them tell about them, or repeat some suggested story. A teacher can draw out their ideas by judicious questioning.

As an illustration; — your class may have been reading about the dog, something like the following conversation might take place.

Teacher. "Well, John, what have you been reading?"

John. "About a dog."

Teacher. "Tell us, Mary, what the writer says." (Mary begins the story and hesitates.) "That will do for the present, — Julia may finish it."

After the story, —

Teacher. "Now who can tell me something more about dogs? Nobody? Who ever saw a dog?" (All hands raised.) "Now each one of you think of some dog." (Hands up.) "Tell me his name."

Scholars. "Pink;" "Towzer;" "Skip;" "Fido;" "Pomp;" etc.

Teacher. "That will do. Now I want to know something about these dogs. Who can tell me something about them? Ah, I only see a few hands. You, Sarah, surely can tell me something about Trip; does n't he bring your dinner? And Thomas, *think* about Towzer. That 's right. All hands are up. But I can't hear all the stories to-day. I 'll hear one now. James looks as if he

had something worth telling: he may tell it, and then you may all take your seats and print either his story or your own, just as you please, and I 'll hear you read them by and by."

Such an exercise would be pleasing and would occupy some of the young scholars' time, which might otherwise be spent in mischief, or, what is worse, in dull inanition.

Never hear a lesson read without making it an opportunity of developing the pupils' powers of expression, whether they be old or young. It will have a two-fold advantage; it will improve their compositions, and keep them awake.

Other exercises may be so conducted as to improve the pupils in their use of language.

History and geography may be doubly valuable, if the teacher requires other than *book-words*,—if the pupils get the *ideas* clearly, and clothe them in their own language. A recitation may not appear so well at first, but the advantages are tenfold. Indeed, I think much more of these indirect methods of teaching composition, than of the direct. Both are necessary, but one is a daily, informal exercise, — the other a set, dreaded ordeal through which older pupils must pass once a fortnight.

And now let me speak of some of the faults which are often seen in the conduct of this exercise, after which a few humble hints will be given for their remedy.

Composition day! dreaded day! I remember it well! As I look through "the dark postern of time long elapsed," I see myself a miss of some ten years of age, who has been told to bring in a composition on the morrow. We have been permitted to choose our own subjects. I seat myself with pencil and paper, and try to spin from my brain something that will hold together. I ransack it through and through, thrust the point of my pencil into it and endeavor to find an end, but no end appears. All is one blank, uniform chaos. After various attempts, one or two little threads are started, but they soon become tangled and broken. I give them up in despair and try others. All fail, and I indulge in a fit of crying. Then I try a letter and succeed no better than the boy did who was shut up two mortal hours and got no farther than "My dear Aunt," and then, — shall I say it? — I go to my father's book-case, look it over after ideas, and from an old book on Indian

wars, cull enough to make a respectable description of the Indian, and send it in, my cheeks and heart burning with shame that I can do no better, and that I have stolen even that.

But since I have grown older and wiser, I have not blamed myself for stealing those ideas, so much as I have blamed my teacher. When a child is sent out by his parents and told to come home at his peril without bringing a certain sum of money, if he cannot *earn* it or *beg* it, do you blame him for *stealing* it as much as you blame his inhuman keepers? Where do you suppose the Hebrews got their straw in old Egypt? Just *where they could find it*, and do you *blame* them? To come nearer home; — where do half our lecturers get their brilliant ideas? where do our authors *originate* theirs? Did you ever read Irving's Art of Book-making, in which he describes, as he expresses it, "one of those sequestered pools of obsolete lore, to which modern authors repair, and draw buckets full of classic lore, wherewith to swell their scanty rills of thought?" If you have n't, read it, I beg of you, before you censure too severely a poor child who steals because he is forced to give what he does n't possess. You will have more mercy, then, for him, and less for yourself that you have been so stupid as to expect him to accomplish what you never could have done under like circumstances. What can a child, unaided, say about "Spring," and the beauties of "Hope," the follies of "Youth," and the comforts of "Age," "Memory," and the like? For such subjects he will surely select for himself; he aims high and wants to bring his teacher something worth reading, and, all untried, does n't know but his puny efforts can grasp them. He does n't know how far off the moon is, only sees she's bright and pretty, and so spends himself in vain attempts to reach her. But show him an apple-tree and a ladder, and he will bring you fruit enough.

"But pray," you will ask, "how are we to find apple-trees for our pupils, and whence can we procure ladders to give them? We are employed to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic; composition is a kind of by-play, and we have no time to attend particularly to it." Yes, you have; and when you are more concerned for the progress of the child than for his appearance before the examining committee, you will find it, and find, also, that the more you awaken his mind to general knowledge, the better he can read, and write, and cipher too.

Then take some time every day for a general object lesson, however short. Tell your pupils something new, and let them tell you what they remember about it at the next lesson. You can continue the discussion of the same object through several consecutive lessons, if necessary, and then your pupils will have something to write about that will really interest and profit them.

Take paper, for example. Tell them the ancient mode of writing; show them parchment, if possible, and the different kinds of paper used in our day. Tell them where it is made, how, and of what, keeping up their interest by asking them questions, or hearing what they have to say. Let them make lists of all articles that are made wholly or in part of paper, and, finally, as a composition exercise, let them write any parts they may remember, or add anything they can to the account. And so you might go on through a wide range of subjects, beginning with the simple and passing to those which require more research on your part, and on that of your pupils. If these exercises are rightly conducted, your own interest will increase, and your pupils' also.

These general exercises may be varied in many ways. Write a familiar, suggestive letter to your scholars, on the blackboard, and require them to answer it; let them write you a letter on some subject, or descriptive of some object; let them write to a friend, and bring the letter to you for inspection. Read them a story, then, giving a few leading words for them to use as a framework, let them fill it up. Give them some dozen or more words, chosen indiscriminately, and let them write a story, or sentences, containing them.

Occasionally an impromptu exercise is very pleasing. Let some easy subjects be given, from which the pupils may select, and let some five, ten, or fifteen minutes be spent by them in unfolding them upon their slates, and let some ten or fifteen minutes more be spent in hearing them read, one after the other, with little or no comment. I have seen this exercise tried with great success, in large and small schools.

Encourage your pupils, if they are old enough, and very young children can begin, to keep school journals, in which they may pen little items of interest that may occur, or put down facts they may wish to remember. Examine these from time to time, (the pupils

bringing them in by sections,) and with proper criticism on your part as to the general features only, (you will hardly have time to go into particulars,) you will soon see a marked improvement in habits of attention, in power of memory, in neatness of penmanship, and in the ready use of language.

Did my limits permit, I would like to touch upon the *physique* of a theme proper, so to speak; but it may be sufficient here to say, — have some uniform system. Do n't let one be folded in one way and another in another, and all superscribed in different ways. Do n't let the headings wander over the page and have no fixed abode. And the margins, do n't let them widen to suit shallow brains or contract for the diffuse; let them be uniform. Attention to these things should be insisted upon.

Let the teacher then criticise, at first, perhaps, only the spelling, grammatical construction, and general appearance of the work, and afterwards, as the pupil improves in these particulars, criticise the style and sentiment. Do n't try to eradicate all faults at once. If you succeed in mending one thing at a time, you will do well.

And now, let me say, I have known many schools thoroughly, and rarely have I seen one where the benefits of this exercise were very deep or lasting, for the reason that the teacher's comments were seldom followed up by the pupils' corrections. In my childhood I wrote many compositions, and never corrected more than one or two of them, which chanced to be selected for some special purpose. My teachers would look them over carefully, I suppose, pencil the errors, transpose and beautify, and I would carelessly look them over, lay them aside, and forget them. Of course, the same errors would be repeated the next time I wrote. I now think that my course then, was but a sample of what too often occurs in these times.

Were I teaching composition now, I would only *mark* the errors, and *suggest* the improvements, insisting upon the pupil's making the corrections himself, either upon the original composition or in a copy which I would re-inspect. It would do him more good to correct his old exercises faithfully, than to write a dozen new ones with criticisms unnoticed.

But in this, as in every undertaking, the great secret of success, is earnest, persevering effort on the part of the teacher, and a determination that nothing shall prevent its accomplishment.

Place your aims high, and while results are good and cheer you on, let them never quite satisfy you if they fall short of your standard. Labor on in faith, nothing doubting, and your success will be triumphant.

LIMIT OF OBJECT TEACHING.

The teacher who begins to instruct by means of objects follows nature. An appeal is made to the senses before the powers of reason are fully matured, and much is learned about the uses and qualities of things before the theory upon which their action depends can be understood. This mode of teaching is specially adapted to the young, as all teachers will agree who have made faithful trial of it. It is the medium through which the most information can be imparted and the largest store of facts secured. The most incredulous skeptic, that professes to have no confidence in this method would adopt it as the only means of instructing his infant child.

But it may be questioned whether object teaching can accomplish all the results that are reasonably expected from our schools, and whether it can secure any of them without a degree of practical skill in the application of it, which would insure success by any method.

The mind should be informed, then strengthened and disciplined; as the body must have material, but then is helpless without muscular strength and dexterity. Information, of course, may be imparted while the mind is disciplining; but there is a period in the education of the young when the acquisition of knowledge about matter should be secondary to the ability to apply the mind, and when the power to wield should be sought rather than the capacity to contain. The child whose instruction is confined to the mere illustration of physical phenomena, and to the securing of an acquaintance with facts merely, is apt to become the man of figures and statistics without the ability so to apply his knowledge that it will become a power. The power of knowledge is not proportioned to the amount of knowledge, but to the ease with which it is applied and the ability to push it to new uses.

A man may be able to tell the number of soldiers engaged in the most important battles in the history of the world. He may have the names of the commanders, the topography of the battle-fields, and many other interesting particulars, and yet he may be completely ignorant of the philosophy of history, and understand no more about the questions at issue in those struggles than if his attention had been directed to computing the sands on the shore or leaves in the forest.

And so in cases without number; much may be seen and remembered of which the causes and relations are not understood. There is an interest awakened in watching results which is not always sustained in tracing out causes. Object teaching reaches its limit when it presents the fact; and hence it seems reasonable that, when facts are learned sufficient for the practical wants of life, there is need of severer discipline than can be obtained by this method. In teaching by objects the mind is at once awakened and interested with little voluntary effort on the part of the learner. But practical men need the power to direct the mind to objects that are distasteful, to concentrate attention upon work which has little in it that is inviting; they need accuracy, self-reliance, discrimination, and the ability to thrust the mind forward to efforts from which it naturally recoils. These are qualities that have most distinguished men of power, and they are qualities that can be brought near to perfection only by hard, dry digging and patient study.

Scholars may be interested while they are not profited; their enthusiasm may be excited while their minds are not strengthened. There is a strong temptation to adopt those modes of teaching even to the older portion of pupils, which regard the interest excited rather than the discipline acquired.

Because object teaching is adapted to the child it does not follow that it will meet the wants of the adult; nor that it is to be pursued through the whole course of education, to the exclusion of other methods, because it is applied with great advantage at first.

Lawrence, Nov. 2, 1863. P.

HAPPY is the hearing man; unhappy is the speaking man.

A TALK ABOUT THE TEACHING OF NATURAL SCIENCE.

It is pleasant to see the current setting strongly in favor of the more general study of natural science, in our schools and our homes. It is pleasant, because it is a movement in the right direction, and one which will incalculably promote the interests of education. It is a tendency toward the gaining of that knowledge which is of most worth, instead of that which is of the least worth.

Natural science should have a prominent place in our common school education. A few years ago, hardly any attention was given to it, even in our High Schools. It formed a subordinate part of the collegiate *curriculum*, but was scarcely admitted into any lower grade of our educational system. Even in some of our best High Schools, at the present time, these studies are crowded into the last year of the course, when little time can be devoted to them. They are but just beginning to be recognized as appropriate studies for Grammar and Primary Schools. Their general introduction into these lower grades of schools will be brought about only very gradually and against much obstinate opposition on the part of school-committees, and, in some cases, of teachers also. All reforms that deal with wide-spread and time-honored evils, are slow in their progress. Then, again, many who would readily admit natural science into our common schools, if there were room for it under the present system, are not willing to make room for it by giving up studies which, though worse than useless, have been considered from time immemorial necessary parts of a common school education; for instance, "that intensely stupid custom," as Herbert Spencer calls it, "of teaching grammar to children."

The "Object Lesson System," as it is called, is to a great extent only another phase of this same reform; or rather, as a rational mode of teaching, it naturally leads to the selecting of the right things to be taught. Starting with the truth that books should be secondary and supplementary, that they are indirect means of gaining knowledge to be used only when direct means fail, it aims to give "not second-hand facts but first-hand facts." It seeks to present truths in the concrete rather than the abstract, and thus suggests the exchange of grammar and political geography for na-

tural history and botany. The system is the right one, the only rational one, and is destined in the end to revolutionize our whole routine of early training. Meanwhile, the good time coming is unluckily put farther off by the stupidity of those who only half understand the system, but nevertheless make a hobby of it.

Since it must probably be a long while before natural science becomes established as an essential and a prominent part of our primary course of study, parents must make it a part of the home education of their children. Every true teacher will aid them in the work, so far as the restraints of an absurd system will allow him to do it. Indirectly, if not directly, he may do a great deal in the right direction, in spite of the system.

Home training in natural science may begin very early, earlier than school training should ever begin; unless, possibly, on the *Kindergarten* plan. We have been surprised at the amount that a child two years and a half old will learn about natural objects, if he is only led to use his powers of observation; and this, be it understood, without being urged to take a single step that he is not eager to take. The exercise should always be a pleasurable one, and he should never be compelled, or persuaded, to continue it a moment longer than he enjoys it. One should even avoid explaining to him things which he wishes to know, if the explanation is beyond his comprehension and will only lead him to puzzle his brain to no purpose. Direct his attention to things that he can see or find out for himself, and you will be astonished at the quickness with which he learned to compare, to recognize analogies and contrasts, to generalize, and to classify.

The earliest studies of this kind should be of the objects themselves; but it is well, we think, at a very early period, to give the child pictures, and let him compare them with the objects. It is wonderful how soon he understands what a picture *is*; not the thing itself, nor another thing like it — as a solid image is — but a mere representation of it on a plane surface. It is wonderful, too, how keen the little eyes are to discern a familiar object, however minute and indistinct a part of the picture it may be. Ask a child two years old to point out a cat, a dog, or a hen, which you yourself can hardly distinguish, and he does it at once.

But, if you let the child have pictures, be sure that they are good

ones — true to nature and well executed. If they are colored, all the better, provided the coloring is truthful. Most of the wood-cuts in books for children are wretched caricatures of the objects they pretend to represent. For children of all ages, better no pictures at all than poor ones. There is no excuse for resorting to poor ones, in these days when the advance in wood engraving, in lithography, chromo-lithography, and kindred arts, and in photography has put really beautiful pictures within the reach of the poorest. The little photograph which you can buy for a shilling, reproduces with microscopic fidelity the choicest engraving or the most exquisite sculpture. The stereoscope for which you pay a dollar or two, is a magic glass through which you may look upon the loveliest landscapes of far-off lands, delineated by the very sunbeams that once illuminated them. For half a dollar you can purchase a dozen delicately colored lithographs, like those published by Prang & Co., of Boston, almost as finely finished as if they had been painted, one by one, with the artist's pencil. Humming-birds and butterflies, like winged blossoms of varied hue; the fairest flowers of field and garden, so true to nature that you miss nothing of their native perfection but their fragrance; and wood-mosses and lichens, with their tiny but brilliantly tinted cups and shields; — such are the subjects of these cheap and charming series of card-pictures. Those of White Mountain scenery and other landscapes are by no means equal in merit to those which we have mentioned. The birds, flowers, and mosses we commend to parents as presents for their children, and to teachers as "rewards of merit" for their pupils. For this latter purpose they are infinitely preferable to the gaudy and meaningless things generally used. They would both awaken an interest in the study of nature, and, by ministering in the best possible manner to the child's love for the beautiful, tend to the cultivation of a pure taste. If we were acquainted with the publishers, we would suggest to them to print an edition of these cards expressly for this purpose.

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One of the evidences of an increasing taste for the study of natural science in the home and in the school, is the rapid increase in the number of books on the subject. A few years ago, it was not easy to find books on botany and zoölogy which you would be

willing to put into the hands of children, either for study at school or for reading at home. It is some ten years ago, that we wanted a text-book on natural history for a class of pupils twelve or thirteen years old. We looked at the two or three then published in the country, but could not make up our mind to try any of them. "Agassiz and Gould's Zoölogy" had just appeared, and for older scholars was as good a book as we could desire; and nothing better, covering the same ground, has since appeared. It deserves, however, a better class of illustrations. The only other good book, Ware's edition of Smellie's "Philosophy of Natural History," which we had studied with the greatest delight when ourself a school-boy, was behind the times in many respects, utterly destitute of illustrations, and hardly adapted to pupils so young. It is but just to say that the new revised and illustrated edition of this work, published a year or two ago, is a model text-book. We have never known a more thorough "revision" of an elementary book on natural science, and only one as thorough — the recent re-editing of "Youman's Chemistry." Revision is too often confined to the title-page, with perhaps a little tinkering here and there in the body of the book; just enough to make the old thing pass for new, with the least possible sacrifice of stereotype plates. It is rarely a conscientious re-making of the whole work, without regard to expense, whether of labor on the author's part or of money on the publisher's.

In Botany, too, it was not easy, ten years ago, to find a book for young scholars, well written and well illustrated. We met with nothing at all suited to the wants of our common schools, or of the youngest classes of our high schools, until the publication of Gray's "How Plants Grow," which is as nearly perfect in its way as an elementary text-book well could be. And not merely for school use would we commend it. It is precisely the book which any person should take up, who wishes to acquire, without the aid of a teacher, the great principles of the science, and to use them in the study of leaf and blossom, as he meets with them in his every-day walks — just enough of the science to open to the lover of nature one of her most delightful provinces, and to direct him therein until the widening horizon of the boundless field, and the ever-increasing throng of strange and beautiful things which he meets, make him feel the need of fuller knowledge and further guidance.

We believe that there would be more students in the natural sciences — out of school, we mean — if those who have a natural taste for such studies and who attempt to pursue them, did not get hold of the wrong books. They naturally take the larger works — if not the largest, certainly not the smallest — and they find so much preliminary drudgery in the definitions, and nomenclature, and all that sort of thing, so much dull work before there can be any play, that very likely they give up in disgust or despair. Now the smallest books, provided, of course, that they are what elementary books ought to be, are just the ones they should have taken, leaving the bigger ones until they feel the need of them and know how to use them.

Suppose you have a liking for Botany, for instance. You love flowers, and would be glad to know how they grow — how the lily of the field, without spindle or loom, arrays itself more richly than the royal Solomon — how, by the magic of vegetable chemistry, the coarse, black earth is transmuted into thousand forms of beauty and fragrance. Get the great works on the subject — as Charney did, in the exquisite French (yet most *un*-French) romance of *Picciola*, to study out the name of the flower which sprang up in the court of his prison, and whose sweet ministry led the misanthropic atheist to recognize his true relations to God and man — and, like Charney, you 'll soon throw aside the tomes, weary and disappointed; resolving, perhaps, to love the flowers henceforth as the the child loves them, indifferent to the mystery of their birth and growth. But, on the other hand, take up the little book of which we have been speaking, learn what it can teach you, and apply it as fast as you learn it, in the interpretation of "God's leafy book," and if you do not, by and by, become a botanist, it will be because you were self-deluded at the start — did n't really love the flowers, and would never, under any circumstances, learn their lovely lore. * * * * * * * * *

If you would have your children begin the study of Botany earlier than they could well use "How Plants Grow," — and the earlier the better, — we commend to you Hooker's "Child's Book of Nature" as an introductory text-book, or as a guide in oral teaching. For home instruction it is admirable. Parents who would fain teach their children about plants, but do not know how,

will find it the very book they need. The author begins with the simplest and most obvious facts in regard to flowers, and goes on, step by step, considering the fruit, seed, leaf, and root, until at last he reaches, by natural progression, the circulation of the sap, and other topics which seem, at first view, above the childish comprehension, but which are easily understood when approached by this gradually ascending path. Indeed, the child may thus learn perfectly some parts of the science which often are not thoroughly mastered in the botanical studies of maturer years.

The same author has written a child's book on "Chemistry," which might well follow the "Book of Nature" in the juvenile *curriculum*. Teachers who are not allowed, or who do not desire, to use it as a class-book, will find it very suggestive of subjects and experiments, if they wish now and then to give their pupils a little lecture, or "talk," on Chemistry, with an insignificant outlay for materials and apparatus.

Very good books to put into the hands of children are the "Child's Picture Book of Quadrupeds," the "Picture Book of Birds," and that of the "Sagacity of Animals." The pictures are the best we have seen in a juvenile book on these subjects, being very truthful and spirited in drawing and admirably cut on the wood. There are, doubtless, many other excellent little books of the kind which we have not seen, or which do not occur to us as we write. A friend tells us that "Pleasant Pages for Young People," noticed in the last number of the *Teacher*, is a capital thing in its way. We have not seen the book, but have full confidence in his estimate of it.

There are many books which are excellent collateral reading for young students in natural science. Some of these introduce the principles of the science in a more familiar and more attractive form than the text-book studied at school, and suggest many experiments at once very pretty and very practicable, which are not likely to be performed at school. Hence they lead the young philosopher to connect what he learns with his every-day life, and to form the habit of observing and experimenting for himself. Such is W. C. Richards's "Harry's Vacation, or Philosophy at Home," a revised edition of which has been published within a few weeks; and in which, by the by, there is much to encourage the

young in the study of English literature as well as of natural philosophy. Such are Mayhew's "Peasant Boy Philosopher," founded on the life of Ferguson, and "The Wonders of Science, or Young Humphrey Davy," by the same author. Such, too, are the "Boy's Play-Book of Science" and "Play-Book of Metals," by Prof. Pepper, whose optical "Ghost" has made such a sensation on both sides of the Atlantic. These are the best books of their class that we have seen, and we wonder that some of our publishers do not pirate — that is, reprint them, as our theatrical managers have stolen the "Ghost." They are rich in the results of the latest scientific research, and many teachers may learn a good deal from them. The illustrations are remarkably good, not unfrequently spiced with a little humor, for which, since we get a taste of it, now and then, in the text, we give the author credit, rather than the artist. Prof. Pepper, we are sure, is as genial as he is learned, and loves fun as well as physics. For the sake of our young people we should be glad to see an American edition of his books, though the English editions are well worth what they cost, even at the present rates of exchange.

Other books of this class are devoted rather to the *history* of physical science. Such are "The History of Wonderful Inventions," in which the chapters on the thermometer, the barometer, the telescope, the microscope, the steam-engine, gas-light, and the electric telegraph, are especially interesting and instructive; and Timb's "Stories of Inventors and Discoverers in Science and the Useful Arts;" both excellent reproductions of the English originals, engravings and all. There are several other books of which we wished to speak in this connection, but we must let them lie on the table till another day.

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The *microscope* is a most valuable aid in this early training in natural science. "But few of us," you say at once, "can afford to buy a microscope;" and you think, of course, of an outlay of thirty or forty dollars as the least that will give you even a tolerable instrument. But what if we tell you that you can get a really good one for *two* dollars? For that small sum you can buy the "Craig Microscope," so called, which for the practical purposes of common people — not professional microscopists — is verily all

that it claims to be. We have tested it pretty thoroughly, and "speak that we do know."

We had seen, for a year or more, in the papers, the advertisement of this Craig Microscope, "magnifying one hundred diameters, etc., etc.," and had set it down as a peculiarly transparent humbug. The picture of the instrument seemed to be a sort of parody of a *compound* microscope, which made its pretensions only the more laughably preposterous. Even when we saw in a city shop-window whole stacks of bright blue paper boxes, each containing one of these wonderful instruments, we deemed it a waste of time to step in and satisfy ourself by actual inspection that it was a miserable imposition. It was quite by chance that we *did* look at one, a few weeks ago, at the house of a friend, and, much to our surprise, found it as simple and efficient as it was cheap. It is a "simple," or "single," microscope — not a "compound" one — of new and quite ingenious construction. The compound microscope in all cases, and the simple, unless of low magnifying power, require no little skill and patience on the part of the observer; but this instrument demands neither skill nor experience and little time or patience. With a little instruction, a child eight years old may soon become an expert in its management. The lens is placed directly upon the object to be viewed, whether "mounted" or not, without any adjustment of focus. If you are examining liquids, you have only to put a minute drop on the underside of the lens, and it is ready for your eye.

Objects properly mounted for the instrument can be obtained at small cost; a dozen for a dollar and a half. It is well to have a dozen or more of these, especially such as you could not readily prepare yourself. They are always ready for use when you cannot conveniently find anything else to show the children; and the little people never weary of seeing them, even for the hundredth time. A young friend of ours, scarcely four years old, rarely comes into the library without teasing to "look through the microscope." If we are "too busy," he pleads for "just one" sight — the butterfly's tongue or wing-dust, the fly's foot, the bit of wasp's wing, or the saw-fly's saws. He enjoys it so intensely, that we are often tempted to prolong the "show," even if we have to work a little faster or later to make up for it; and so we go on, dissecting

flies and gnats with cambric needles, and exhibiting their feet, and jaws, and eyes, and *antennæ;* or, with vengeful satisfaction, catch a mosquito and deprive him (or *her*, since it is the females that torment us,) of the long, keen lances which have been plunged into our flesh so ruthlessly.

One word, by the way, about a class of mounted objects, of which you should have at least one or two specimens. We mean microscopic photographs. These are interesting, not only as testing the power of the instrument, but as showing how infinitesimally small and yet how marvellously perfect is the picture painted by the pencil of light. In the centre of a bit of glass, you can just discern, with the naked eye, a spot such as you may make by lightly touching the point of a lead pencil to paper. Put it under the lens, and you read the Lord's Prayer, or the Declaration of Independence, the letters very small, though magnified ten thousand times superficially, but clear and distinct; or the Greek Slave stands before you, as faultlessly beautiful as in the marble of Crawford; or the tiny speck expands into Canova's Graces, lovingly entwined in a lovely group.

But it would take a whole "talk" like this rambling one — already too long for your patience, we fear — to tell what you may do with one of these cheap instruments. Of course, there are things that you can *not* do. You have not a variety of magnifying powers, you cannot mount your objects in the "opaque" way, nor examine certain classes of "transparent" objects, nor do divers other things that would be possible with a fifty dollar or five hundred dollar compound microscope. But if you do not get a rich dividend of enjoyment and instruction in return for your *two* dollars, we are very willing that you should blame us for tempting you to a foolish investment. M. S. E.

THE NUMBER OF BOOKS printed since the invention of the art, in 1440, to the end of the year 1822, was estimated by Peignot at 3,681,960; and counting an average of three volumes to each book, and 300 copies to each edition, the aggregate of printed volumes was estimated by him to be 3,313,764,000.

Resident Editors' Department.

MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

THE Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION will be held in Boston, at MERCANTILE HALL, on MONDAY and TUESDAY, Nov. 23d and 24th.

The exercises will be as follows:

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23D.

At 10 1-2 o'clock, A. M., the meeting will be organized for the transaction of business. The customary addresses and reports will be made.

At 2 1-2 o'clock, a Lecture, by THOMAS HILL, D. D., President of Harvard College.

At 3 1-2 P. M., a Discussion. Subject: "The Expediency of making Personal Criticisms upon Teachers in the School Reports of Massachusetts."

Evening Session. At 7 1-2 P. M., a Lecture, by JOHN D. PHILBRICK, ESQ., Superintendent of Public Schools in Boston.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH.

At 9 o'clock, A. M., a Discussion. Subject: "Methods of Teaching Geography and History."

At 10 1-2, Discussion. Subject: "What kind of Instruction in our Schools will serve to increase the Loyalty and Patriotism of the American People?"

At 2 o'clock, P. M., Election of Officers and other business.

At 2 1-2 o'clock, P. M., a Discussion. Subject: "What is the Next Step to be taken by Educators to secure the Highest Interests of Education in the Commonwealth?"

At 3 1-2 o'clock, a Lecture.

Evening Session. Educational Addresses from various individuals.

The Committee of Arrangements have not requested the private hospitality of the citizens of Boston, but have made arrangements by which those attending the meeting may be entertained at the Marlboro', Adams, and Quincy Houses, at $1.50 per day, and at the Parks House at $1.25 per day.

Tickets *to go and return* on the Worcester Railroad, can be purchased at *half price.* Special tickets will be prepared for the occasion, and must be purchased of the ticket masters. *The Secretary's check will not be received on this road.*

Free return tickets can be obtained of the Secretary at the meeting, over the following roads, viz: Boston and Maine, Boston and Lowell, Eastern, Old Colony and Fall River, Boston and Providence, New Bedford Branch.

W. E. SHELDON, *President.*

T. D. ADAMS, *Secretary.*

OCTOBER 19, 1863.

VALEDICTORY.

LIKE Othello, the Department, in the twelfth month of its service, finds its occupation gone; and, with due resignation, we prepare to return to private life. We have had our day, and we cheerfully step aside to permit those who are anxious to win the honors and wear the laurels of editing, to step into our places. We have endeavored to do the several tasks assigned to us with fidelity, and to promote the welfare of the *Massachusetts Teacher*, both the individual and the publication, to the best of our humble ability. How far we have succeeded, we leave others to judge; but we are happy to inform those who are interested in the magazine, that it has been prosperous; that its financial condition is satisfactory; and that we leave our trust "in good order" to our successors.

The *Teacher* is published by the Massachusetts State Teachers' Association; but we imagine there are only a few who speak and vote in the meetings of this society, who have any adequate idea of the amount of labor required to issue their monthly publication. Upon the Resident Editors devolves the duty of bringing the Monthly Editor into connection with his work; sending the copy to the printer, reading the proof, writing up the matter for the Department; to receive, submissively, the censure of grumblers and fault-finders; to growl, occasionally, at printers, binders, and paper-makers, and other labors, too numerous to mention. And all this must be voluntary work. We must feel as much interest in the affairs of the nation as in our own. We must do, without compensation, often without thanks, and often under censure, the labors for which a person of fair ability would receive five hundred dollars a year.

We mention these things, not that we object to them, not as grumblers, but to give our friends of the Association, subscribers and teachers, an idea of the work which is performed in their behalf. These labors are necessary, and we have cheerfully performed them, as our predecessors did before us, and as our successors will after us.

"I subscribe for the *Teacher*, but I seldom read it," said a prominent teacher, the other day. "I think these publications, and the labors of Teachers' Associations, have elevated our profession, and largely increased our compensation." He was right, and we were rejoiced to see that the influence of the *Teacher* and the Association were appreciated in this direction. We believe, as we have before observed, that every teacher in Massachusetts is better appreciated and better paid for the influence of the society and the magazine.

Of course, this view suggests the duty of every teacher in the State, in regard to both the Association and its publication. They should be liberally sustained, with money and with influence. The stupid excuse, that the *Teacher* is not worth the dollar, becomes ridiculous when urged in the face of the acknowledged facts.

We regard ourselves as private individuals now, having laid aside the insignia of office, and therefore privileged to speak plainly. We appeal to our fellow-teachers, all over the State, to stand by their own institutions, to subscribe and pay for the *Teacher*. We hold it to be the duty of every instructor to do this simple, but necessary work. Those who voluntarily labor to carry on the *Teacher*, ought not to be left unsupported in their task. If they do not do their work well, help them do it better. Subscribe for the *Teacher*, if you can do no more.

With this farewell growl at those mortal enemies of our cause who grumble at what they do not pay for; with this affectionate appeal to those who are willing to do their duty when it is pointed out to them; and with our sincere and hearty thanks to those who have cheered us by their labor, or their sympathy, or their dollar as subscribers, or advertisers, we resign the chair editorial to those who, we trust, will do more and better for the *Teacher* than we have done.

[We enter our emphatic protest against the resignation of Oliver Optic. *The Printer.*]

EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS.

Educational Rooms, Saturday, October 7. Mr. Payson presiding. Subject — "*To what extent shall children be allowed or encouraged to read the popular light literature of the day, and how can they be induced to make judicious selections?*"

Mr. Bradford: It is well to understand what is meant by the term "light literature." If the common class of novels, and productions like the New York Ledger, Boston True Flag, etc., be intended, there is but one answer — total abstinence. The imagination may find its normal stimulus in books of acknowledged worth, and it is our duty to induce the young to read only these.

Mr. Hagar: "How shall they be induced," etc. They shall not be induced at all. The effect on the young student is only harmful — indisposition to application, morbid craving for excitement, often yielding in the man, far short of the promise of the lad.

Rev. Mr. Burton: This is a question of the first importance. The unnatural stimulus of love, often caused by this reading, leads often to direful results. A few with over-stimulated imaginations, thus caused, often spread their sorrowful influence through a school.

Mr. Sheldon: The very appearance of some young persons, to a keen observer, is often evidence of its bad influence. Aversion to concentrated effort, and the dreamy reverie tell their own story.

Mr. Stone: I can testify to more than one, promising in youth much for the future, and yielding no adequate return. The sorrowful failure was owing to this pernicious literature.

Mr. Philbrick: It produce an increase of emptiness of mind. The mere novel reader has nothing to say in society. The land is burdened with these poisonous issues. They find their way to many a home, and that which is equally poor into many Sunday-school libraries. I read no work of fiction that does not belong to standard literature.

The next meeting will be on the 1st Saturday in December. Subject for discussion — *Individual Promotion.* SEC.

A MAN is apt to think that his personal freedom involves the right to make his fellow-men do just as he pleases.

KINDERGARTEN.

Miss E. P. Peabody's Kindergarten in Pinckney street, is described in a long and interesting letter from a Boston correspondent of the New York *Evening Post*. We extract the following passages:

"The principle of a Kindergarten, as defined by Miss Peabody, who is an enthusiast in this direction as in every other subject upon which she bestows attention — is the training of the infant mind as the gardener trains his plants or cultivates his flowers; it is the organization of what is prettily called a commonwealth of children, where the imagination and the moral and physical nature of the young are equally subjected to careful culture, gradually developing under the warmth and sunlight of a watchful sympathy until the grosser qualities become refined into the essence of beauty. The secret of this training, in Miss Peabody's own words, lies in the faculty of 'developing a child from within outwards, by plunging into its peculiarity of imagination and feeling;' realizing the child's idea until it seems to become a fact tangible and present. If the little one conceives an imaginary railroad, the Kindergarten teacher accepts its rude blocks as veritable cars and engines, and the child gets a practical lesson. If it learn the gamut there is an illustration which teaches the theory of music; and all through the system of instruction there is not only this sympathy between teacher and pupil, but also a similar sympathy among the pupils themselves. 'Children,' observes Miss Peabody, 'begin with loving others;' and she has added from the stores of her own experience among the young this aphorism of a wise philosophy: 'Children begin with loving others quite as intensely as they love themselves — forgetting themselves in their love of others — if they only have as fair a chance of being benevolent and self-sacrificing as of being selfish. Sympathy is as much a natural instinct as self-love, and no more or less innocent in a moral point of view. Either principle alone makes an ugly and depraved form of natural character. Balanced they give the element of happiness, and the conditions of spiritual goodness and truth, making children fit temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in.'

"The life of a child in a Kindergarten is certainly very pleasant. Of the thirty-six little pupils now belonging to Miss Peabody's school, thirty were present on the day of my visit. The youngest was three and a half years old, and the oldest seven. The average age was probably five years. They were evidently the children of cultivated parents. Large-brained, quick-eyed and intelligent, their manner was full of animation, and their interest in the things taught them never flagged for an instant. Unlike children in the old 'infant schools,' these little creatures had comfortable arm-chairs to sit in, and were not wearied by constrained postures or by long continuance upon one subject; for no lesson is permitted to exceed fifteen minutes, except one, to be hereafter mentioned, where work and play together occupy half an hour."

WORCESTER COUNTY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

The Fourteenth Semi-Annual Meeting of the Worcester County Teacher's Association commenced its session at the Town Hall in West Brookfield, Friday afternoon, at 2 o'clock. Mr. Lombard of Worcester, the President, in the chair. The meeting was opened with prayer, by Rev. Mr. Merrill of West Brookfield.

The first subject taken up for discussion was, "*Thoroughness in Teaching.*" Mr. Carter of Fitchburg, Rev. Mr. Stebbins of Clinton, Mr. Russell of Fitchburg, Mr. Newton of Worcester, and the President, discussed the question with much

spirit. This discussion was followed by recitations given by three ladies of the Worcester High School, who had received their training in elocution from Miss Anna Russell. The first piece was "Barbara Freitchie," recited by Miss Susan G. Gale; the next was "The Launching of the Ship," by Miss Louisa Palmer; the last was "Jephthah's Daughter," recited by Miss Mary Wentworth. The recitations of all the young ladies were excellent, doing themselves and their instructress much credit. The next topic discussed was, "*Methods of Conducting Reviews.*" Mr. Russell of Fitchburg commenced the discussion, and was followed by Messrs. Lombard, Stebbins, Newton, and Carter. There was a very respectable number present during the afternoon, including nearly or quite a hundred female teachers.

The Association met at half-past seven in the evening. Prof. Greene of Worcester spoke of the characteristics of a good reading book. For his own use he was not particular as to the book he used. The best book he had seen, however, after the old American First Class Book, was the new book by Hillard. If the rules could be taken out he would like it still better. Though he would not discard rules, yet the best reading book for his use would be the one with the fewest rules.

Rev. Mr. Walker of Worcester was then introduced as the lecturer for the evening. Prof. Henshaw, principal of Williston Seminary, had been announced to speak on the subject of "Public Education in Ancient Athens." Mr. Walker said he would speak of that education which American young men can find in the Athens of the world — begging pardon of any Bostonians who might be present — saying he meant Germany. After giving certain reasons why Germany should be considered the land of students, he proceeded to specify some of the dangers to an American student in Germany. These dangers, he said, did not consist in the forms of infidelity which exist, but rather in the manners and customs of the people, and their personal behavior. Certain vices at which he would be shocked at home, he finds there indulged in and laughed about. Profanity and intoxication are among the most prevalent vices. The Sabbath is regarded as a holiday. Another danger to a student is that he will lose all earnestness of purpose and of life. The principal advantages in visiting Germany were then stated to be found in residence and travel. The lecturer then gave some important suggestions as to the best mode of travelling, so as to avoid annoyance, and in an economical way, to make a tour in Europe profitable.

An excellent essay by Miss Ellen P. Palmer, of the Sycamore Street School, Worcester, entitled, "How to make a School-room Pleasant," was then read by the President. Miss Palmer received the first premium of five dollars.

Saturday morning the Association met at nine o'clock, and the committee on nomination of officers reported the following list, which was balloted for and elected.

President — L. W. Russell of Fitchburg.

Vice Presidents — M. C. Stebbins of Clinton, C. W. Carter of Fitchburg, and H. M. Harrington of Spencer.

Secretary and Treasurer — H. E. Rockwell of Millbury.

Executive Committee — J. H. Newton of Worcester, D. B. Hubbard of Leominster, and Andrew J. Lathrop of Westboro.

Mr. Lombard, on retiring, expressed his gratitude for the consideration and co-

operation of the members of the Association, and his regret at being obliged, by change of residence to sever his connection with it. Mr. Russell, on taking the chair, expressed in a happy manner, his thanks for the honor, and his hearty devotion to the welfare of the Association. The next topic discussed was, "Military Discipline in Schools." Mr. A. R. Nichols, of the Highland Military School, advocated the adoption of military discipline in a very clear and satisfactory manner.

Miss Mitchell, of the Westfield State Normal School, next gave a most thorough teaching exercise in Physiology, illustrating the same by elaborate drawings, made at the time, upon a blackboard.

Rev. Mr. Stebbins of Lancaster was then introduced as the lecturer of the forenoon, who gave a valuable address upon, "The Demands upon our Teachers; How shall we meet them?"

The following resolutions were then unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That we learn with deep regret that Mr. J. K. Lombard of Worcester purposes to leave our county for a new field of labor in a neighboring state; that our Association is largely indebted to him for the profit and pleasure of its meetings since his connection with it; and that we heartily wish him that success in his calling, and that general prosperity, which are the legitimate results of his sound scholarship, love for his vocation, and gentlemanly bearing.

Resolved, that our hearty thanks are hereby tendered to the citizens of West Brookfield for their generous reception of our Association, and to the selectmen of the town for the free use of the Town Hall, to Mr. S. N. White of the school committee for his assiduous and polite attention to the comfort and convenience of the teachers who have attended this meeting; to Rev. Messrs. Walker and Stebbins, and to Miss Mitchell, for the interesting and valuable instruction communicated in the lectures with which they favored the Association; to the young ladies of the Worcester High School for their recitations; to the Western, Worcester, and Nashua, and Fitchburg and Worcester railroads for free return tickets.

The Association then adjourned sine die, after uniting in singing the tune America.

ERRORS IN THE USE OF LANGUAGE.

Mr. Editor: — I have long considered the teachers of our schools as the conservators of the English language; and think the public might with propriety hold them responsible for the ungrammatical expressions, which they suffer to pass unrebuked and uncorrected. Whatever is permitted in the schools goes forth, as a matter of course, into families, and hence is adopted, as endorsed and approved by those to whom the community looks for what is correct and pure. Hence how vexatious it is to find expressions like the following passing current among us, as if Dr. Johnson himself had given his formal approval of them.

1. "I could but think," for I could *not* but think, meaning I could not help thinking, or could do nothing else.

2. "Between each," for between each *two*. Between *one* thing is evidently nonsense.

3. "He was going fishin," for he was going a-fishing; and so of all similar phrases, a-boating, a-hunting, a-gunning, a-sailing.

4. Using the names of the days of the week, without prefixing the preposition *on*, a coarse and slovenly expression, which good taste should invariably forbid.

Editors generally have so almost universally fallen into this inelegant habit, that only two or three of our Boston presses avoid it. In every daily paper save one, the record of events runs thus: "The gentleman arrived Sunday, took steamer for New York Monday, joined the army of the Potomac Tuesday, was in the Gettysburg battle Wednesday; fought bravely, and returned to Boston Thursday, and met his rejoicing family."

The expression "posted" or "posted up," meaning familiar or acquainted with, ought to be tabooed by every lover of pure English, and consigned to the slang dictionary.

These faults ought to be corrected; and who shall do it, if the schoolmaster fails?

The omission of the apostrophic s, in nouns ending in *s*, is another awkward practice. How often we notice it! "Gen. Banks' victory." "Rosecrans' patriotism."

One of the most popular lecturers in our country, having Burns, the poet, for his theme, invariably pronounced the name of the poet, as if it had no *s* in it — thus robbing Burns of a portion of his name, and annoying his audience by reducing Burns to Burn.

Now, Mr. Editor, I protest against this liberty being taken by any man, who assumes to teach the public; and can never allow one, however popular, to murder our noble language, to gratify his personal whim.

I shall offer you in my next, some remarks on the *spelling* of our language, with which not a few, from ignorance or perversity, assume methods which the teacher, as I think, is called on to condemn both in theory and practice. G. F. T.

Keene, November, 1863.

THE FIRST LESSON IN FRACTIONS.

The following lesson would not be needed where pupils have been carefully taught from an early age. But thousands have not been well taught; and to such the following lesson was given as an introduction to the subject of fractions.

Teacher — (Holding before the class a slip of paper and tearing it into two equal parts.) What have I done?

Class — You have torn it into two pieces.

T. — What is it that I have torn?

C. — A piece of paper.

T. — True, but was it a whole thing or a part of a thing?

C. — It was a whole thing.

T. — Is it a whole thing now?

C. — No, it is pieces.

T. — Can you give me another word instead of pieces, (after various trials and some conversation,)

John — We can say parts instead of pieces.

T.— (Holding up the pieces of paper.) Observe these; what can you say of them?

C.— The parts are alike.

T.— Will some one try to find another word that will mean about the same as alike?

Maria — The parts are equal.

T.— Will some one tell me what I have done?

Henry — You have divided a whole thing into equal parts.

Here draw lines upon the blackboard and divide them, divide pieces of paper, sticks, anything that may be at hand, into equal parts, until things are divided into every number of equal parts as high as nine. The pupil should be caused to observe that whole things — units — are separated into equal parts. After the teacher has made these divisions of the unit, every pupil should do the same.

T.— Instead of calling these (showing the parts) equal parts of a whole thing, we will call them — (here print plainly on the board the word, a *fraction*. It fixes attention and addresses both the eye and the ear.)

What shall we call them?

C.— We call them fractions.

T.— Can you now tell me what a fraction is? (After some time *used* — not wasted, in talking to the class —)

Thomas — A fraction is one or more than one of the equal parts of a unit.

T.— (Holding up the pieces of paper,) I wish to write something that shall remind me that the unit was divided into two equal parts.

What shall I write?

C.— Write 2.

T.— And what for this? (showing three parts.)

C.— Write 3. Proceed in the same manner till 9 has been written. The numbers will then stand thus: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Here, as an exercise, point to any number, and let the pupil tell into how many equal parts the unit is divided.

T.— (Showing the two pieces of paper.) The unit was here divided into two equal parts, (putting one out of sight,) and you now see —

C.— One.

T.— Can you tell any way in which I can write this *one* so that we may know that but one of the equal parts is expressed?

George — Write it by the side of the 2.

John — Write it *over* the 2.

Continue to show the parts and let the class direct in writing till a line of fractions is formed, having 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, for denominators and such numbers as you please for numerators. Here exercise the class, pointing to denominators, calling them "numbers below the line," and ask, into how many equal parts is the unit divided here? How many are represented? etc. Then call upon different pupils.

T.— (Pointing to 5-9).

Pupil — Five-ninths — This fraction shows that the unit has been divided into 9 equal parts, and 5 of those parts are here represented.

After this write other fractions, having different denominators. Every pupil will

generalize sufficiently to explain them in the same manner that he has explained those whose origin he has observed. Be sure never to depend on questions that may be answered by monosyllables. Let every pupil stand up and explain his example, then question him as much as you please.

The above exhibits the origin of fractions, and the manner of representing them. M.

INTELLIGENCE.

PERSONAL.

Rev. Dr. Peabody retires from a ten years' editorship of the *North American Review*, with the profound respect of multitudes of its readers for the admirable spirit and ability with which he has conducted that Quarterly. *Prof. James Russell Lowell* and *Charles Elliot Norton* are his successors.

Rev. Dr. Alexis Caswell has resigned his Professorship of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy in Brown University. He has held a Professorship there for the period of thirty-five years, giving instruction not only in all the branches of mathematics, but also in various other departments of study. For many years he has discharged the duties of President, whenever the head of the College was absent.

Hon. Anson Smith, late Superintendent of Public Instruction in Ohio, has recently been elected Superintendent of the Public Schools of Cleveland, Ohio. His salary is $1800 per year.

Miss Mary Pierce, recently died at New Haven, leaving about one hundred and twenty thousand dollars as the result of industrious school-teaching and judicious investment. Connecticut people of a former generation remember her as the proprietress of a young ladies' seminary at Litchfield.

EDUCATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

Education in England. The report of the Committee of Privy Council on Education for the year 1862, issued in June, states that during the year 1862, as compared with 1861, the number of schools or of departments of schools under separate teachers which were actually inspected were increased by 18, and the number of children by 28,736. A comparison of these two numbers proves that the schools have been better attended than heretofore. The number of pupil-teachers was diminished by 525; the number of certificated teachers increased by 417: of students in training to become schoolmasters and schoolmistresses by 118; capitation grants were paid on 26,108 more children. This last number, agreeing closely with the increase in the number of children inspected, confirms the proof of better attendance. The number of new school-houses built was 157, comprising (besides class-rooms) 268 principal school rooms, and 129 dwellings for

teachers; 92 other schools were enlarged, improved, or furnished afresh; accommodation was created for 38,615 children (exclusive of the schools improved or nearly furnished, but not enlarged). During 1862, as during 1861, 60 inspectors, including 24 assistant-inspectors were employed in visiting schools and in holding examinations. They visited 10,918 daily schools or departments of such schools under separate teachers. They found present in them 1,057,426 children, 8452 certificated teachers, and 14,881 apprentices. Of the schools or departments 2179 were for boys only; 2117 for girls only; 4764 boys were instructed together; 1597 were confined to infants (children under seven years of age); and 561 to night scholars. Of the children, 583,815 were males, and 473,611 were females. The female scholars are 47·78 per cent. on the whole number. This percentage remains nearly constant; it was identically the same in 1860; in 1859 it was 43·49; in 1861 it was 45. The percentage of females upon the whole population over 3 and under 15 years of age in 1851, was 49 to 7. The difference in the percentage of female scholars is explained by the demands of a poor man's home upon the service of his daughters, particularly as the nurses of younger children, from a very early age. The inspectors also visited 40 separate training colleges, occupied by 2972 students, in preparation for the office of schoolmaster or schoolmistress. In December last, these students, and 2705 other candidates, were simultaneously examined for the end of the first or second years of their training, or for admission, or for certificates as acting teachers. The inspectors also visited 408 schools for pauper children, containing 33,835 inmates, and 37 ragged or industrial schools, containing 2818 inmates. In comparing the expenditure of 1862 with that of 1861, there is a decrease of 38,698*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.* Decrease occurs under the heads of — Building, 40,463*l.* 8*s.* 7*d.*; books and apparatus, 6305*l.* 13*s.* 8*d.*; pupil teachers, 4756*l.* 0*s.* 10*d.*; industrial schools, 2320*l.* 15*s.* 7*d.*; other heads, 695*l.* 18*s.* 3*d.* — total, 57,541*l.* 16*s.* 11*d.* On the other hand, an increase to be set off under the following heads: Certificated teachers, 9548*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.*; assistant teachers, 740*l.* 0*s.* 7*d.*; capitation, 5287*l.* 8*s.* 8*d.*; training colleges, 2834*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.*; other heads, 431*l.* 16*s.* 10*d.*; total, 18,843*l.* 3*s.* 2*d.*

Education in Germany. The fourteenth congress of the school masters of Germany has just been held at Mannheim; the sittings having lasted three days. Among the questions discussed were the best methods of developing memory in children; the means of awakening in them a love of country; the advantages resulting from a larger share being given to gymnastic exercises in education; the study of music, especially of national songs; the necessity of teaching children, with the greatest care, the history of their country, and especially the great deeds and victories of the German people, etc.

Massachusetts. The energy and persistence of the good people of Springfield in establishing a Public Library is well worthy the imitation of other cities and towns. Last week 350 volumes were added to it, and it now numbers 15,600 well-selected volumes.

Vermont. An association of persons in Bennington, Vermont, who favor the erection of a suitable observatory on the summit of Mount Anthony, has been incorporated by a special act of the Legislature.

Education in Ireland. The report of the National Education Board shows that 803,364 children were on the school rolls at some time or other in the course of the year 1861; the average number on the rolls was 521,044, and the average daily attendance 284,726. These last two numbers are more by above 20,000 than in 1860, indicating an improvement in regularity of attendance. Nearly a seventh of the entire population of Ireland was therefore on the rolls as pupils in 1861. Nearly five-sixths of these were Roman Catholics, 663,145; the other 140,219 Protestants. The Board consider the proportions from the several religious denominations to be as fair as could be expected under the circumstances, and the proportions are gradually becoming more favorable to the national system. The local emoluments of the schools in 1861 comprised £34,342 from payments by the children, and £9,930 from local subscriptions.

BOOK NOTICES.

PAYSON, DUNTON AND SCRIBNER'S WRITING TABLETS. By J. W. PAYSON, S. DUNTON, W. M. SCRIBNER, and M. D. L. HAYES. Boston: Crosby & Nichols. 1863. Also, THEORY AND ART OF PENMANSHIP: A Manual for Teachers, by the same authors.

A great want, felt by nearly all teachers of the art of Penmanship in our schools, has at length been supplied by the production of these admirable Tablets and the Manual, giving detailed directions how to begin and pursue the instruction in a *systematic* manner. It is true that some time has been daily devoted to exercises in writing in our schools, but in a majority of cases there has been no definite *plan* pursued by the teachers. In fact the instructor has in too many instances had but indefinite ideas of what was to be done to secure a neat, and plain style of penmanship to the pupil.

By a careful study of this complete Manual and an intelligent use of the Tablets a great reform may be secured. By using the Tablets one element at a time can be presented to a class, and great accuracy of form secured, and then a new principle grafted upon the preceding one and thus, every form may be taught and analyzed, and correct definitions given in all the combinations.

In the teaching of this art at the outset, it seems to us that every letter should be subjected to a careful analysis and the principles and elements understood. Styles of writing change with the demands of the age. In the early history of printing we find a labored and stiff style, which cost much time and care to execute, while the tendency of the present day is to a style of *business penmanship* which is simple and consequently more easily acquired.

To us it seems unfortunate that so little regard is now had to the *form* of the letters. In examining the Tablets before us we are glad to find that *beauty* of *form* is not sacrificed to rapid movements entirely, or to any considerable extent. Considerable rotundity is desirable to secure legibility in establishing a style of

hand writing, and in this respect we regard the system presented in the Manual, with the elaborate and detailed method of giving the instruction so plainly stated as meeting the wants of all practical teachers. We have always had the professional writing master, who could execute the "*winged eagle*" and the "*goose quill*" and other *senseless* flourishes, and generally write very well himself; but what is needed, is a *system* which every intelligent teacher can apply in the instruction to be given in the common schools from day to day to the great masses of the young of our people, who cannot patronize the special instructors.

We earnestly hope these Tablets will find their way into every school-room, and the Manual into the hands of every teacher.

MORAL PHILOSOPHY; or, The duties of Man considered in his Individual, Domestic, and Social Capacities. By GEORGE COMBE. Reprinted from the Edinburg edition, with the author's latest corrections. Large 12mo; price $1.25. New York: Fowler & Wells, Publishers, No. 308 Broadway.

The present work was first given to the public under the following circumstances:

"In 1832 an association was formed by the industrious classes of Edinburg for obtaining instruction in useful and entertaining knowledge, by means of lectures, to be delivered in the evenings after business hours. These lectures were designed to be popular with regard to style and illustration, but systematic in arrangement and extent. One evening in each week was devoted to Astronomy; two nights to Chemistry; and I was requested to deliver a course on Moral Philosophy, commencing in November, 1835, and proceeding on each Monday evening, till April, 1863. Thus there were delivered twenty consecutive lectures on Moral Philosophy, on the Monday evenings; fifty lectures on Chemistry, on the evenings of Tuesdays and Fridays; and twenty-five lectures on Astronomy, on the Thursday evenings. The audience amounted to between five and six hundred persons of both sexes."

A cotemporary says: "This book is a treasure. It is the only American edition of the Moral Philosophy containing the author's latest revisions. It teaches the progressive philosophy on every page, and should be in the library of every lover of humanity. Health, happiness, progression come from works of this stamp, and we heartily commend it to the world."

GEOGRAPHICAL STUDIES, by the late Professor CARL RITTER of Berlin. Translated from the original German, by WILLIAM LEONHARD GAGE, Translator of "Story of my Career" etc. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1863. pp. 356.

The translator and publishers of this volume have done the American students of Physical Geography great service by bringing out this work of one of the most distinguished writers on this science the world has yet produced.

Cotemporary with Humboldt, Ritter's investigations tended to the study of mankind in history and ethnology, rather than to material science in geology and physics. New interest is awakened in the matter of this book from the fact that Mr. Buckle, in his late work on the History of Civilization, has appropriated Ritter's thoughts and applied them in a way which perverts the obvious meaning of the original author.

We have in this volume the Introduction to "Erdkunde," or the Physical Geography of Asia and Africa — a work of immense research — and six lectures given before the Royal Academy of Science at Berlin.

The work is embellished with a fine likeness of the Author, which is regarded as a correct representation of him in middle life. The print is admirable, and the publishers are entitled to credit for this contribution to science.

LEVANA, OR THE DOCTRINE OF EDUCATION. By JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER, author of "Flower, Fruit and Thorn Pieces," "Titan," etc., etc. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 1863. pp. 400. Price $1.50.

All educators will be interested in this valuable book. The author was a teacher in Germany, and in this work has given a detailed account of the peculiar methods of instruction he pursued in his school at Schwarzenbach. This he pronounces the happiest period of his life.

The suggestions contained in this work are especially pertinent to parents, taking the ground that in propounding general systems, it is too much forgotten that real education is the work of individuals on individuals.

Home training is treated in an intelligent and instructive light. Probably all the views he presents would not be endorsed by Americans, but the grand principles he unfolds are correct, and cannot fail to do good among us.

The translator had a difficult task before him, but has performed it with admirable success. The publishers present it to the public in a book of great taste and beauty.

We trust it will be extensively read by the intelligent friends of education in America.

WELD'S AND QUACKENBOS'S PROGRESSIVE ENGLISH GRAMMAR. Illustrated with copious exercises in Analysis, Parsing, and Composition. Adapted to Schools of every grade. Portland, Me.: O. L. Sanborn. 1863. pp. 238.

This is a thoroughly *practical* text-book, and at the same time sufficiently comprehensive for the wants of our common schools. Its rules and definitions are clear, and distinctly express the principles involved. Practical exercises in false syntax are introduced to test the ability of the pupil to construct sentences properly. After using this book two years, we feel no disposition to change it for any other with which we are acquainted.

With suitable teaching we are confident that a scholar will get a good knowledge of the English language from this book.

THE BOSTON RECORDER. Published at 116 Washington Street, Boston, by Rev. E. P. MARVIN and Rev. J. T. TUCKER, Editors and Proprietors.

This is one of our most valued exchanges. The paper has improved very much under its present management. Alive to the issues of the day, it presents *truth* with an able and unyielding spirit.

HALL'S JOURNAL OF HEALTH:

The November number of this excellent monthly, contains valuable articles on "Vital Capacity," "Parental Corrections," "Manners," and the usual "Health Tracts." This journal ought to be well patronized by Americans, who need its sound teachings.

CONTINENTAL MONTHLY FOR NOVEMBER:

The November number of this patriotic and noble work is on our table. The following are the contents: Freedom of the Press; The Brothers; Unuttered; William Lilly, Astrologer; Jefferson Davis, Repudiation, Recognition, and Slavary; Diary of Frances Pirasinaka; Maiden's Dictionary; Thirty Days with the 71st Regiment; Reason, Rhyme, and Rhythm; Currency, and the National Finances; October Afternoon in the Highlands; The Isle of Springs; The Restoration of the Union; Was he Successful? American Finances and Resources; Voiceless Singers; A Detective's Story; Literary Notices.